DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 531 RC 018 545

TITLE Elementary Schools. INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions. National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Annual Conference (22nd, San Diego, California, October 16, 1990).

INSTITUTION Department of Education, Washington, DC. Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.; National Advisory Council on Indian Education, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 16 Oct 90

NOTE 13p.; In: The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education Joint Issues Sessions Proceedings. See RC 018 538.

PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Elementary Education; Elementary Schools; Elementary School Students; Financial Support; Hearings; *High Risk Students; *Parent Participation; Primary Sources; *Small Schools; *Special Education

IDENTIFIERS Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools; Tribally Controlled Schools

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes two joint sessions held by the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to hear testimony on issues in Native American education at the elementary school level. Issues and problems fell into the areas of: (1) the special needs of high-risk elementary students, the need for alternative programs, misdiagnosis of Native students into special education, the need for parent activism in the special education process, problems of fetal alcohol syndrome and emotionally disturbed children; (2) the impact of standardized testing, bilingual education issues, and the need for cultural education and culturally relevant programs; (3) barriers to parent participation and empowerment arising from teacher and administrator attitudes and from bureaucratic regulations at Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools; (4) unacceptable BIA funding practices, and financial problems impacting facilities, transportation, curriculum, and materials; and (5) accountability of tribal government and the BIA. Recommendations and working strategies are proposed. The benefits of small schools and low teacher-student ratios are discussed, particularly for low-achieving students and for students from more traditional tribal communities. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED341531

INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
October 16, 1990

"Elementary Schools"

RC018545

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INAR/NACIE Issue Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
October 16, 1990

Summary: "Elementary Schools"

The first session on Elementary Schools was co-hosted by INAR Task Force member David Beaulieau and NACIE Council member Andrea Barlow. The second session on this issue was co-hosted by INAR Task Force member Ivan Sidney and NACIE Council member Robert Chiago. The following issues, recommendations, and exemplary programs were discussed:

I. Meeting the Special Needs of Elementary Students

School Restructuring

- Our elementary schools need to be restructured because they currently no longer meet the needs of our kids, either socially or academically.

- In restructuring the elementary setting, especially on a reservation, we first need to integrate various services. For example, at my school we brought an adult education program into the school. That way we have begun to work closely with parents and we can show students that we are here to educate everybody, including children, parents, and the community. The other reason that we brought in adult education was to create more alternatives for our at-risk kids to ensure that they complete high school and feel successful. I think we need to provide alternatives such as adult education or other programs for at-risk students to keep them off welfare.

  In my alternative classroom I tell my students, "Look, I'm giving you an opportunity. If you don't work in this classroom, you're going back to the regular classroom." They don't like to do that. There may be kids I haven't met who need a different arrangement than mainstreaming into a regular program, but we don't have that alternative right now. Bringing all methods of education into the same area would offer alternatives.

Special Education

- I am somewhat concerned about special education and the inability of schools to properly assess children with regard to their special educational needs because there is a great deal of misdiagnosis going on. There is a unique and special role for parents when they are required to be involved with developing and supporting the plans for special education.

- I have a child who is in special education, plus I have been an advocate for other parents with children in special education. The problem is that when you talk about legal requirements for parental involvement, it is not parents as partners, or parents as collaborators--it's parents as cake bakers. In this case, the cake they are baking is the child. Parents bring the child in and there is a recipe that they are supposed to follow. A typical meeting includes the principal, specialists, student teachers, and the classroom teacher. The parent walks in when this group is already assembled, and they say "Sign here. This is the program your child needs." If you ask any questions, they ask, "Where did you go to school? Are you trained to be a speech teacher, or are you a special education teacher, or are you a certified special day care teacher? What is your expertise?" In the special education process, the parents' role is simply to sign off on the program.

If you can get your child signed up under special education for behavior modification, the school cannot expel your child for behavioral problems. That is the only positive comment I have to make about the special education process.

- Money is not available to meet the needs of handicapped children, and consequently these children are literally without services, reservation-wide. We need to look more closely at that law and seek out the necessary funding.

- On the Tulalip tribal reservation, we are concerned with the reading and language abilities of our children at the elementary level through the high school level. At a meeting with our special education specialist, we found out that we have a sophomore who is at the third grade reading level. He is currently in the tenth grade and has just been pushed through the system. These students are tolerated, and their behavior is overlooked. The specialist also pointed out six or seven individuals whom he labeled as being mildly retarded. This didn't sit too well with me because if they had been given one-on-one help in a resource room, they might have been taught the right way and wouldn't be in that situation. We see a lot of our kids who are getting up into the secondary level who can't read and who don't understand what they are doing.

- I am also from the Tulalip Tribe. There are five students at the middle school level who, if they don't drop out of school, may never reach the eighth grade equivalency level. Two of our liaisons were trained in Individual Education Program (IEP) testing, but are not active in the IEP testings. It would be interesting to find out how many liaisons on a national level are trained for testing our Indian children. Some Indian students have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or come from families that are dysfunctional or illiterate. We need someone to take an interest in these children and make sure there is an Indian liaison or someone monitoring their tests and encouraging the students to try hard. The one tenth grade student at the third grade level said he didn't even try on his test because he thought he was already lost.

- We can establish a pre-referral process with a pre-referral specialist not associated with the special education department, so they don't have the vested interest of serving a child in special education. These people should be familiar enough with the culture that when they go into the home for pre-referral visits, they can ask appropriate questions. They can then fill out the pre-referral form and give an objective assessment of whether that child is actually an exceptional child with special needs.

<u>Dealing With the Problems of FAS, FAE and Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Children</u>

- I am the superintendent of the Pierre Indian Learning Center, which is a boarding school in South Dakota serving 15 reservations in the Aberdeen area office. I am concerned with the problems of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and the lack of qualified staff to deal with the type of students we have today. South Dakota studies have shown that one out of every four children born on reservations is affected in some way by FAS or Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE). FAS results in the inability to learn and in severe behavior problems. Furthermore, these children often come from homes where they are physically or sometimes sexually abused, compounding the physical problems they already have. As an administrator of a school serving 15 different tribes, I feel the need for qualified staff. Most schools in our area cannot hire teachers for the emotionally disturbed, and often we have to use regular classroom teachers who are not qualified to deal with the severe behavioral problems of our students.

I think it's time, or past time, for the tribes to get together and start putting some pressure on the BIA and IHS to establish some sort of regional treatment centers for these kids. We do not have any place in our area where we can send these Indian kids who have severe behavioral problems or emotional problems, and usually if you send them back to the reservation and turn them over to Social Service, it becomes a financial problem. To send one child to a state or private facility costs $40,000 a year. Not too many tribes can afford that.

We really need a regional treatment center for kids whom the schools can't deal with. We are a boarding school that is supposed to be dealing with children with special needs, but we just cannot handle them. We don't have school psychologists or psychiatrists on our staff. We contract those services on a limited basis, but we just do not have the resources to keep these people on staff, despite our great need for them. These children need intensive counseling. If we get these kids when they are six or seven years old, there is a chance they can be saved. However, if we just tolerate them until they are teenagers, their problems get so bad that nobody can deal with them and they end up in state penitentiaries or in prisons. It is not fair to kids to just tolerate their problems. It is also not fair for a reservation, tribe, or public school to push them off into a boarding school to get them out of their hair, because we can't deal with them either.

The Benefits of Small Schools

- Red Lake, Minnesota, has just passed a policy requiring a maximum of 15 students per class in the early elementary grades as a strategy for improving academic achievement. Achievement is thought of in two ways: (1) enabling students to accomplish the intended objectives, and (2) enabling them to learn how to learn in a fashion that will sustain achievement over a long period of time.

- Despite a rural consolidation policy, the State of Minnesota has allowed a number of school districts with elementary schools in Indian villages and reservations to maintain those schools because they are effective. Grand Portage Elementary School serves 30 students in grades K through 8, organizing the school into two different grades, early elementary and late elementary. It's a very effective school that seems to enable students to be very successful in the high school.

- What our small school does for the children that big schools don't do is more in the affective area--we treat the children as individuals. There is a bigger school system close to us and we tend to get many of its students because they can't handle the big size. And almost without exception, the students who transfer to our school do much, much better. They seem to really like it better at our school, and I think it is probably due to the smallness of the classes and because we are able address the needs of each student. Being a small school in a small, isolated community allows us to see potential problems a student may be experiencing at home and enables us to do things to help. We may not be able to change his or her home life, but there are certainly things we can do to make that child feel a little better and alleviate some of the pain that he or she is experiencing. So I think that we need smaller schools. We also need to remember, in evaluating schools, that it is not just important that students do better on test scores, but that they feel happy and at home in the school, and they have opportunities for personal growth.

Generally, the students who are in the brighter half of the class academically are successful in making the transition to high school, but those in the lower half have a lot of trouble making the transition to a bigger school. I don't think it really has to do with academics,

per se. I think it's more of a social matter because the students who tend to drop out do so not for academic reasons, but for other reasons. Socially, they have problems integrating with the other students. The area where I live is a fairly isolated and traditional community, and the students go to high school in the most urban area of the reservation. The students who grew up in the urban area are different. For example, in our school there are not many people who listen to heavy metal music, but at the other school, this is what many of the popular kids are involved in. The kids from the urban area are on a different wavelength, and our kids have trouble relating to it, or fitting in.

Urban Indians

- The needs of urban Indians are not being addressed, especially in Los Angeles. Los Angeles has the largest Indian population in the state today, but they have a hard time getting funding because they are not a reservation. A lot of the children who grow up there lose a lot of their cultural identity. The small office of Indian education and the Indian centers can only do so much. It is hard for one small Indian center to reach all of the people. We lose a lot of Indian kids culturally and educationally in the formative, elementary years because they don't see many Indian mentors showing them what they can do in urban areas.

II. Academic Program

The Impact of Standardized Testing

- I have a real complaint with standardized testing. I feel that the emphasis on standardized tests and the way they are utilized in the Bureau designs the curriculum itself.

- Our students have to take the California Achievement Test which handles only a very small range of skills. It is directed towards basic skills and doesn't even look at writing. I feel that education needs to be much more holistic. The Bureau's emphasis on standardized testing tends to push the curriculum so that it primarily addresses the very, very basic skills and doesn't allow for very much critical thinking. Furthermore, it doesn't get into other issues such as the emotional needs of the students, for example, seeing how many come from homes where alcohol and drug abuse is a problem.

  We need a more holistic way of teaching that addresses those emotional needs of children. Even though it's not addressed very often in school, I'm a strong believer that even spiritual issues should be addressed in some way, even if it's only through teaching the traditional values of the community. I feel that often the emphasis on standardized tests takes away from that because many of the teachers aren't Native Americans and their primary concern is teaching the few basic skills measured by the test.

- I was wondering if we have any data available from Canada, because we seem to be going in a different direction than they are. We have minimum requirements, whereas we ought to be thinking more about maximums. This is especially true when tests are elevated to such a high level of importance, because we are really running a test-based curriculum. I'd like us to investigate the Canadian system in which they don't emphasize minimum standards and consequently are able to move into higher thinking skills.

Native Language and Culture

- It is interesting that there are many different reasons why Native language is offered in schools. In areas where the language is dying out, instruction becomes critical as a way to maintain the language. In other areas it becomes critical to teaching English. These are the different things we consider in language policy as it affects elementary schools, particularly when you have children coming from different backgrounds.

- We are a small school on the Navajo reservation that is sandwiched between big BIA schools and the nearby public school. We get all of the children that have special needs and we've become known as a special school. We have students in K through 6 who have all kinds of emotional and social problems. We are currently in the process of developing a curriculum that will meet the students' needs. Our community is very traditional, but the children speak a language that is between English and Navajo--not too much English and not too much Navajo. Their competency in both languages is low. For instance, a second grader from that community will speak both languages, but the Navajo will not be totally Navajo, it will be a kind of slang. The Navajo is just used for basic conversation, but it interferes with the learning of English. So we're trying to teach the Navajo language in our Navajo culture and language class, to try to teach students the sounds and to appreciate the language. We do this on the presumption that in order to learn English one has to be competent in his or her first language. We're trying to at least teach the grammar and the language of formal Navajo as a vehicle to enable students to learn English. However, we have students who already speak some English, and there are only a few that are fluent in Navajo. We also have some students who understand a language but don't speak it. That is why we have our language class.

- On our reservation we have two tribes: the Shoshone Tribe at the eastern end and the Arapaho Tribe at the western end. The Wyoming Indian High School and the elementary school offer both the Shoshone and Arapaho languages. The two Arapaho schools on the western end, Arapaho and St. Stevens, incorporate the Arapaho language into their schools. They also have a "language bowl" in which they compete against other schools in the Arapaho language. I would like to see if someday we could have the Shoshone language incorporated in the Fort Washakie School. We have never been able to do this because we have people who sit on our boards who are not enthusiastic about the Indian culture, or they don't see the need for us to have the Indian culture taught. I don't think they understand that we need to work on developing the language because it is starting to die out and our people need to have this knowledge. The Arapaho School and Wyoming Indian School are now starting up language classes for adults and parents because it does no good for the students to learn the language and never hear the language at home.

- We have high academic achievement in our school but our cultural participation is at a minimum. I blame this on the administration because they will not allow us to offer many cultural activities in our school. At first we were only allowed a half day for Indian Day; this is the first year they allowed us a full day. We have asked the Board if we could start having our young students learn the Indian dances because these are dying out. There are only a few people left who know how to perform many of the dances. We would like this type of instruction integrated into our school.

- We need to put our culture right in the classroom and not just with Title VII and Title V. It needs to be right in the math programs and right in the reading programs.

- I come from the San Carlos Apache Reservation. We have an Apache dance group that is part of the extracurricular activities (much like football) and performs on American Indian Day.

Teaching Strategies

- We need teachers who are intellectually, emotionally, and mentally tough. We need teachers who are tough, but firm and caring because many of our kids are complaining that they don't feel they are needed or wanted at the school. We need teachers who are flexible and who teach discipline and responsibility and do not just demand it. I think that in our old teacher education system we were taught just that--to demand respect from kids. But we forget that we are not in the same era anymore. The reason we have to upgrade and change our thinking and our teaching strategies is because we have different kinds of kids. We have kids that are very fragile and kids that have not been trained. These kids will look to the school if they feel it is a place where they can survive and learn social skills, as well as academic skills.

III. Parental Involvement

Barriers to Parent Involvement

- Parent involvement is needed as part of a basic restructuring of the schools. As a small school, I think we have much more community support than I see in other places, but I still feel that the parents as a whole don't feel as though it is their school. Regardless of the programs we design, the structure of the schools is still essentially based on an Anglo model that has been around for hundreds of years. As long as we have that model, parents are not going to consider schools as their own institutions. In the future we need parents, tribes, and the communities to take over schools. Parents should not just be on a board that makes a few decisions, but should assume responsibility for the schools.

- Too often schools bring parents in, ask them what they want, and they don't know what they want. It's not that parents don't want to be involved and it's not that they don't have ideas; I think it is the way we ask them for their ideas. I think that parents not only have to feel as though they are a part of the school, but they have to somehow run the school. Until that happens, we will always have a problem with parental involvement.

- The parents at our school are really involved, but mostly in extracurricular activities. We had several incidents with abuse, so now it is hard to get parents into the classrooms where they want to be because they have to go through a screening process. Even our parent volunteers have to go through a screening process where they have to fill out forms for the BIA and get fingerprinted. Parents can come into the school to observe and visit, but they can't work with the children until they are cleared through that process. This also affects our ability to attract teachers because they also have to go through that process. Currently we have three teaching positions that are not filled because prospective teachers are put through so much that they often back out.

- The basic structure of Bureau schools is such that the government is really in charge because it controls the regulations. Our school board can make some decisions and be fairly powerful, but it cannot do whatever it pleases because it is restrained by governmental policy and regulations. School boards used to just be advisory councils, but

now the government lets them make some decisions. However, they are not necessarily the decisions that really affect the schools.

- I'm from a reservation in northern California, and right now we are making a distinction between education and schooling. We have a number of people in our tribe who are highly educated, but poorly schooled. We have found that the structure of the laws does not really promote parental involvement. Impact Aid gives the tribe the ability to set up a policy and procedures to ensure tribal and parental input. However, if that law is not carried out by the school district, the tribes' only recourse is to file suit against them and cut off all funds to the school district, which doesn't help. This is the same with Title V. There are no teeth in that law for parental involvement. I think that the federal government, especially the Department of Education, needs to look at a heavy monitoring process and also at changing that legislation so that it ensures parental involvement.

- Most areas that must have parental involvement such as Title V and Impact Aid tend to put parents on parade. You bring parents in to look at your back-to-school night. You bring them in to look at your school activities. You get them to bake cakes for your class. But parents as collaborators and parents as decisionmakers are not roles that most schools allow. How many schools have a sign that says, "Welcome parents?" How many schools have chairs for them to sit in the office, or even sit in the classrooms? No schools do because they want to send a message. Most of our schools in California have fences around them and gates to keep people out. That's the message that schools are sending.

- We have a difficult time involving parents in the schools because there seems to be a reluctance on the part of the professional staff to allow any non-professional people to actively participate in decisionmaking. When teachers are trained to believe that there are only four teaching styles and four learning styles, and you come in and tell them there are culturally-based learning styles, it goes against everything they believe. When the textbooks and curricular material reflect those teaching styles, we are designing a system for failure for parents. We have had to put the tribal education committee in a situation where they are advocates for the parents and adversaries to the school, because the school has a hidden curriculum. I don't think it is any business of the school to be socializing my children. The tribe has the ability to socialize children, and we have educational systems that are deliberate, systematic, and sustained that have been operating for generations. We train people how to be Hoopas. We educate them to be Kiowas. We educate them to be Hopis. When we send our children to school, we do not want them to be socialized as general Americans. The laws and the structures of this land are designed so that schools are a social imposition for social control. We oppose that.

- We are trying to give parents the ability to be partners and collaborators. Most parents want their children to go to school, but they object if going to school means the children have to stop being who they are and stop being a part of their community. Parents should have the ability to sit down and make a decision on what textbooks are going to be used in the school, what programs are going to be taught, and what the curriculum should look like. But approaching parents and giving them two days to choose a textbook is a strategy that is bound to fail because what you have not done is train the parents to know what should be included in a textbook. I am not talking about parenting classes. I resent the fact that somebody gives a parenting class to tell me how I should raise my children, how much time on task and how much quality time I should have with them. I have learned that from my tribe. But they can teach me how to look at a textbook so that I can evaluate it. What does it mean to say "choose the best curriculum?" I, as a parent, have to

know what a curriculum is in order to choose one. Otherwise, I am making a decision that could be harmful for my child, and I will not participate.

Programs and Strategies That Work

- Minneapolis has created a program called Niibin, which is Ojibwa for summer school. It is a unique elementary school program that allows parents to come in and be involved in the actual classroom teaching. The program provides day care at the same time for siblings who are not yet of school age.

- Our local school district has an Indian week. We sponsor a powwow, and throughout the whole week parents and grandparents come in and give demonstrations about our tribe. This has been a very powerful enforcer to build self-esteem with our Indian students.

- We have an Indian Day every Fall that involves the community, parents, and teachers. People begin practicing and putting together costumes two weeks ahead of time, and on the day all of the grades, K through 6, and all of the staff put on a dance. We have a big luncheon or a potluck, and have dances all day long. This is reservation-wide so all of the schools hold their Indian Day the same day. I think that really pulls everyone together. We also have a culture day in May when we bring the Elders into the school to do demonstrations on basket weaving, traditional cooking, and artistry.

- I belong to an eighth grade fundraising parents' group. Often it is difficult to get parents in school for different events, but this parent group attracts almost all of the parents to all of their sales. Sometimes we stay all night at dances to sell things. All of the parents are really involved in this because they know that this group is theirs; they have power to do whatever they want. The group belongs to them, and they make all of the decisions.

- I work in a very small school, and approximately 90 percent of our students are in Chapter 1. This year our Chapter 1 program is training parents to teach their children, and we pay the parents to come in and learn how to work with their children. This is a way of increasing parent involvement and having them feel more comfortable coming to the schools. They have a reason to be there, and they have a monetary incentive also. Most of our parents are not very educated and feel they can't really help. Hopefully through our program they will feel able to help their children.

- When I first took over the Title IV position in my school, I have had a hard time getting parents involved. It seems as if they don't like the idea of coming into the schools; for some reason it really intimidates them. I remember we couldn't even get parents involved in the parents' committee. We would tell them, "This Title IV is the only program that you have left where you actually have a sign-off. You plan this program. You do a needs assessment. This is your program." Still they would not come in. They don't seem to realize that these schools are theirs, these are their children, and they have the right to come out and speak.

One of the things we are trying to do is to overcome this intimidation and create a comfortable feeling with the parents through an Indian Day. We asked each class to choose a tribe to study for about a month, and then to draw pictures of the tribe they studied and decorate their doors. That way, when parents come into the school, the students are able to tell about the traditions and heritage of different tribes. We have a 98 percent Indian enrollment at our school and the Shoshone students think they are the only tribe on the reservation. It is really nice for these students to learn that there are also other tribes, and

there are some Indians who do not look Indian. Along with these studies, we also hold mini-workshops for making fry bread, beading, and making saddles. Sometimes our younger students who are in drama read legends to other students. We are able to involve a lot more parents through these activities and now they are actually planning the Indian Day.

- On our reservation we have a Wyoming Indian youth conference that involves administrators, teachers, students, and parents. This is a one-day conference with different workshops led by Indian role models. Seventh through twelfth grade students from all of our schools--Wind River, Arapaho, St. Stevens, Wyoming Indian, Lander, and Riverton--attend these workshops and receive awards for attending. This is another way to get our people involved in the educational process and for our students to see that there are Indian people who have degrees and are able to go out and do things. They see that life doesn't end on the reservation, and they gain a broader perspective of what is outside its boundaries.

IV. Funding

Facilities

- In our school we have old and new buildings. We need monies for new buildings to make the school and facilities attractive.

- I'm the facility manager at Loneman School in Oglala, South Dakota, and am particularly concerned about facilities. The issues that need to be improved in elementary education throughout Indian country are numerous, but I think we need to be concerned about facilities, because this is the first time that people are becoming aware of the dilapidation. Loneman School contracted their own facility services a year ago. We have spent the last year fixing up things that were very dangerous for our children, including outlets that were bare and exposed. This is how our children had to go to school. I think the Bureau has to assume some responsibility and put some money in the budget to bring these schools up to safety code standards.

- We have schools that have assumed facilities contracts, but the Bureau has not written into the budget the very basic tools needed to assume a facilities contract such as saws, hammers, and ladders. There is no shop space or money for tools written into the budget; however, we are still expected to perform the same way that the Bureau employees under facilities performed. This is a real crucial concern for the safety of our children.

- Many of the contractors who build our schools are shoddy individuals. Shopping centers built off reservations last for 10, 20, or more years. But on some reservations, there are some schools that last for only two years. I question the kinds of contracting that might be taking place in terms of facilities management. There may even be some problems with the "Buy Indian Act." Seven million dollars might be put into a school, and two or three years later the school is nonfunctional.

Transportation

- The rurality of schools in South Dakota is never considered in the Bureau's budget. Transportation money is never written into the budget, and yet we have kids in areas that cannot be reached by a regular, 60-passenger school bus. We need four-wheel drive vehicles

because people live six, seven, or eight miles off of the road in what is known in South Dakota as "gumbo." And when that is wet, it will bog down even a four-wheel drive. None of these expenses are written into the budget, yet they are very real for the school. I also think that GSA has become outrageous with 50 percent. We need an avenue where we can purchase our own busses and get away from GSA because that is just unfair to the schools.

Curriculum and Materials

- At the Pine Ridge area schools, a teacher ordered school books during the summer and has still not received the books because there is no money. It is beyond me how we can have teachers teach classes without books just because there is no money. The Bureau is not meeting the very basic budget needs.

- The small schools are the ones that suffer because we take care of the children who migrate around and who have special needs, but we get very little money for our programs. We need funds for manipulatives, library books, and basic supplies. My proposal is for the BIA and the government to provide more money for curriculum development in the small schools, because currently there isn't any money available.

- Our curriculum is outdated. We need to address the need for funding for gifted programs in our schools. Many times people are labeled Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), but actually, their problems stem from the inability of the curriculum to meet their needs. There is a lot of FAS, but some of the behavioral problems are related to the child being gifted and the schools not having anything for them, particularly on the Pine Ridge Reservation. We have 14 different schools, and not one of them has a gifted program.

Unacceptable Funding Practices

- Tribes, tribal schools, and especially boarding schools have been fighting with the boundary issue for many years. We have a lot of problems with parents who want to send their children to boarding school, but BIA officials refuse to sign off on them. We had cases in which we enrolled students in our school with the understanding that the tribes will sign off on them, but they refuse to sign off until after the count week. Last year, on the first Monday after count week, we received 36 referrals from the 15 tribes that we serve. That is not fair. We had about six kids last year whom the BIA refused to sign off. As a result, neither we nor the tribes received funding for these students. We lost out on money and we are short to begin with. If the BIA is going to play politics with the tribal schools and the boarding school, the only loser is the children. These issues need to be resolved. We need to do something about the boundary and ISEP funding.

- Despite the budget problems Congress is having and the talks about sequestration of funds, I told my board that we would not close down. I have 160 kids here and I think the state still has an obligation to educate them even if we lose our funding. I was joking, but I said, "I'll just bus them down to the public schools. Then I guarantee you, we will get some action from the state senators when the white folks start complaining about the Indian students invading their schools. They will start supporting the tribal schools."

- We have a K through 8 school enrolling 1,049 students this year. We are in dire need of facilities. We are a public school and receive 874 funds that are earmarked for the total operation of the school. We don't have a tax base so we are reimbursed to offer the best educational curricula to the students. We do have some at-risk funds, and a 12-month

salaried parental involvement coordinator. Our high school students are tuitioned out to off-reservation public schools and that is where we run into a lot of difficulties.

- It is wrong to continue to cut funding while we are giving Nicaragua $800 million and we are giving savings and loans people paid vacations to so-called prisons, and our children are going without.

Recommendations

- We should set up a system in which funding follows the students. If we only serve them for three months, we should give two-thirds of the money to their next school. However, this will be a problem with the boarding schools because we also get money for a residential program that we just cannot recover.

- ISEP funding in South Dakota is $2,500 for tribal schools; the states receive about $2,000 more to serve the kids. ISEP funding for students went up about $600 in the last ten years or so, while public schools went up about $2,000. I don't know the exact figures. The State of Minnesota has an agreement with the tribal schools in that it will supplement the tribal schools. For instance, ISEP funding is $2,500, and if the state gets $5,000 per student, they will reimburse the difference to the tribal schools. I think an agreement in all states should be worked out because the states still are responsible for educating these kids.

- We need to make salaries attractive for special needs teachers so they can come out to the reservation. Salary is their first consideration. It is so hard to get counselors, special education teachers, and enrichment teachers out to the reservations, especially to small schools.

V. Other

Trust Responsibilities

- I think we have good, solid leadership. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) governments are not yet 60 years old, and in looking at political development theory, we are right on course for developing governments in terms of some of the political corruption we have witnessed because that is normal for development. Our leaders are getting to a point where the public is becoming more participatory and demanding that their actions become legitimized. When this occurs, things will start falling into place. However, when we have hearings like this, and people are asked their input on the Bureau restructuring, and they take out the Aberdeen area office, I question the Bureau's leadership. What is their responsibility back to these tribes? We have treaty rights and 638 rights. We have self-determination rights that are being violated left and right by Bureau officials in Washington, DC. Bureau leadership has to be questioned as much as tribal leadership. Responsibilities and the rights that we as sovereign nations have need to be realized, including the right to education for Indian children.